

In Memoriam

*William Buel Franklin*

*February 27, 1823 March 8, 1903*

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S. R. Franklin.









W.B. Franklin

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## In Memoriam

### WILLIAM BUEL FRANKLIN

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[Reprinted from the *Hartford Courant*, March 9, 1903.]

Major-General William Buel Franklin, U. S. V., one of Hartford's best known men, died yesterday morning at his home, No. 144 Washington street. He had been failing for several years and consequently his death was not unexpected. He began to sink Saturday afternoon, gradually lost consciousness during the night, and died at 7.45 A. M. without any suffering. Charles Weiser, a nephew, and Miss Emily M. Brace, were with him when he died. General Franklin leaves two brothers, Samuel Rhoades Franklin, rear-admiral of the United States Navy, retired, of Washington, D. C., and Colonel Walter Simonds Franklin of Baltimore, who served with distinction in the Union Army in the Civil War, and was on the staff of General Sedgwick and was by his side when the latter was killed. Another nephew, William Weiser, by General Franklin's deceased sister, lives in York, Pa., and there are six other nephews and nieces, children of Colonel Franklin.

Rev. George T. Linsley, rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, made a brief announcement of General Franklin's death at the morning service yesterday, and spoke of the general's long connection with the church. Rev. Rockwell Harmon Potter, pastor of the Center

Church, and a neighbor of General Franklin's, also referred to his death in prayer at his church at the morning service.

General Franklin's funeral will be attended at the Church of the Good Shepherd at 3.30 o'clock Wednesday afternoon. There will be prayers for the members of the family at General Franklin's late home, No. 144 Washington street, at 2.30 o'clock, and the body will be taken to York, Pa., for interment on Thursday morning.

General Franklin selected this city as his future home after his resignation from the army in 1866 and was chosen vice-president and general manager of Colt's Patent Fire Arms Manufacturing Company, a position which he held until April, 1888. In 1886 he became president of the board of visitors of the United States Military Academy, and he was elected president of the commission which built the Capitol, in 1872, his record as an officer of engineers in the Mexican War peculiarly fitting him for the position. He was the consulting engineer of the commission from 1873 to 1877 and superintendent from 1877 to 1880. He was a member of the board of water commissioners of the city of Hartford from 1868 to 1878 and was chairman of the committee of judges on engineering and architecture at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876.

General Franklin was one of the presidential electors from this state who nominated Samuel J. Tilden as the democratic candidate for President, and from 1877 to 1879 was adjutant-general on the staff of Governor Hubbard. In July, 1880, he was chosen president of the board of managers of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers, a position to which he gave the

greater part of his time until about three years ago. In June, 1888, he was appointed commissioner-general from the United States to the International Exposition at Paris, and in the following year received the decoration as a grand officer of the French Legion of Honor, being the only American citizen at that time who held that distinction.

General Franklin was for several terms commander of the New York Commandery of the Loyal Legion of the United States, in which he always retained his membership. He was a member of the Society of the Cincinnati, the Sons of the American Revolution, the Army and Navy Club of Connecticut, and of Robert O. Tyler Post, No. 50, G. A. R., of which he was a charter member. The general was formerly a director in the Colt's Patent Fire Arms Manufacturing Company and was, until about a year ago, when he resigned, a director of the Panama Railroad Company. He was a director of the National Fire Insurance Company and until comparatively recently attended the meetings of the board; vice-president of the Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection & Insurance Company, and a director in the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company.

General Franklin was an Episcopalian in faith and a Democrat in politics. He became a member of the Church of the Good Shepherd when he came here to live and had frequently served in the positions of senior warden and vestryman. General Franklin was married on July 7, 1852, to Miss Annie L. Clark of Washington, D. C. She died in this city July 17, 1900. They had no children, and the general failed perceptibly after her death.



## COLONEL GREENE'S SKETCH.

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### A REVIEW OF THE CAREER OF THE GREAT COMMANDER.

Brevet Major-General, late U. S. A. Major-General, U. S. V.

Elected August 1, 1866, resigned December 6, 1882; restored April 4, 1888, 1st class. Insignia 789. U. S. Army:

Cadet, U. S. Military Academy, July 1, 1839.

Brevet Second Lieutenant, Corps of Topographical Engineers, U. S. Army, July 1, 1843; Second Lieutenant, September 21, 1846; First Lieutenant, March 3, 1853; Captain, July 1, 1857.

Colonel, 12th U. S. Infantry, May 14, 1861, resigned, March 15, 1866.

Brevet First Lieutenant, U. S. Army, February 23, 1847, "for gallant and meritorious conduct at the battle of Buena Vista, Mexico."

Brevet Brigadier-General, U. S. Army, June 30, 1862, "for gallant and meritorious conduct in the battles before Richmond, Virginia."

Brevet Major-General, U. S. Army, March 31, 1865, "for gallant and meritorious services in the field during the war."

U. S. Volunteers:

Brigadier-General, U. S. Volunteers, May 17, 1861; Major-General, July 4, 1862; resigned, November 10, 1865.

Survey of Northwestern Lakes. General Kearney's Expedition to South Pass of Rocky Mountains. Assistant in Topographical Bureau at Washington, D. C. Survey of Ossabaw Sound, Ga. Mexican War, battle of Buena Vista. Assistant Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy at Military Academy. Survey of Roanoke Inlet, N. C. In charge of Oswego

(N. Y.) Harbor Improvements. Lighthouse Inspector, First District. Superintending Engineer of Portland (Me.) Custom House and Marine Hospital. Lighthouse Engineer, First and Second Districts. Engineer-Secretary of Lighthouse Board, Washington, D. C. Member of Board to construct bridge across the Mississippi at Rock Island, Ill. Charge of Extension of Capitol and General Postoffice, Washington, D. C. Chief of Construction, Bureau of U. S. Treasury Department, and Treasury Building extension. Manassas Campaign; battle of Bull Run, Va. In command of Alexandria, Va., and a division in the defenses of Washington, D. C. Peninsular Campaign; commanded a division, and Sixth Corps, Army of the Potomac. Maryland and Antietam Campaign; Rappahannock Campaign; commanded Left Grand Division (First and Sixth Corps), Army of the Potomac. Department of the Gulf. Commanded troops in and about Baton Rouge, La. Expedition to Sabine Pass, Tex. Nineteenth Army Corps, and Western Louisiana. Red River Expedition. Captured, July 11, 1864; escaped, July 12, 1864. President of Board for Retiring Disabled Officers, at Wilmington, Del.

Wounded, April 8, 1864, at Sabine Cross Roads, La.

So stands the bare record in the archives of the Loyal Legion of one of its most distinguished members, of one of the country's most gallant and competent soldiers, of one of her noblest sons; a mere memorandum as it reads, but each item of which he, in the doing, filled with his own rare intelligence, accomplishment, integrity, bravery, and devotion, and made it a story of a worthy deed well done, and the whole a history of great services, in great exigencies.

William Buel Franklin was born at York, Pa., February 27, 1823. His father, Walter S. Franklin, was clerk of the House of Representatives in Congress; his great-grandfather was a soldier of the Revolution, and his

great-grandmother, Mary Rhoads, was the daughter of Samuel Rhoads, a Pennsylvania member of the first Continental Congress. His mother was the daughter of Dr. William Buel of Litchfield, a descendant of Peter Buel of Windsor, Conn. All the heritable virtues of such stock met in this descendant.

#### WEST POINT AND MEXICAN WAR.

In 1839 he was appointed a cadet at the Military Academy at West Point, where he graduated in 1843 at the head of his class and with unusual distinction. He was assigned to the Topographical Engineers, and entered at once upon the field work of that department on the lakes and in the Rocky Mountains; after two years of this duty and a year in the topographical office at Washington, he was made second lieutenant, having hitherto held only brevet rank, so small was the army organization and so slow the promotion. The Mexican War brought him the serious duties of topographical engineer on the staff of General Taylor, in the discharge of which he distinguished himself, as he also did on the field of battle, being brevetted for gallantry at Buena Vista. For two years after the Mexican War he was assistant professor of natural and experimental philosophy at West Point. For the next two years he was engaged in the construction of coast defense works; then followed four years of constructive work for the lighthouse and customs services. In March, 1857, he was appointed secretary of the lighthouse board, and in October following he reached the grade of captain in the corps of topographical engineers. In November, 1859, he was charged with the

superintendence of the Capitol and postoffice buildings, and in March, 1861, he was assigned to duty as supervising architect of the treasury department.

#### CIVIL WAR.

The outbreak of the Civil War laid such accomplishment as his under instant contribution, and on the 12th of May, 1861, he was made colonel of the Twelfth United States Infantry, and on the 14th was appointed brigadier-general of volunteers. He was assigned to the command of a brigade in Heintzelman's division of the army under McDowell's command, which first came into collision with the enemy at Bull Run, which Sherman says was the best planned and worst fought battle of the war. Beauregard with his forces menaced Washington in front; Johnston at Winchester threatened its rear. Patterson was relied on to keep Johnston busy while McDowell dealt with Beauregard, whom he found in position at Manassas on the line of the Run. McDowell's plan of attack was to first demonstrate so strongly against the enemy's right as to lead to his concentration there, and then strike his weakened left with a heavy column from his own right which should turn his position and take it in the rear. Johnston had, however, eluded Patterson and added his force to Beauregard's just in time, and, by one of those curious coincidences not infrequent in military operations and occurring several times in our Civil War, the two were preparing and had actually begun the movements for an attack by their right on McDowell's base at Centerville, which was in rear of his left as his lines were formed. Franklin's brigade had consisted of four regiments of short term



men. The term of enlistment of one Pennsylvania regiment expired at midnight before the battle, and they marched to the rear to the sound of the enemy's guns. Their gallant colonel, Hartranft, reported to Franklin and served as an aide during the day — a presage of his devoted service during the war. Franklin's brigade, with the famous Ricketts Battery attached, was a part of the turning column, and came upon the position on the Henry House plateau on the Sudley new road, which was the critical point in both the actions of the day. It was at this point McDowell's flanking force struck the Confederate left, and made an entirely successful attack, in which Franklin's command was heavily engaged at the center of things. As soon as this attack was well under way, McDowell ordered the troops in front of the Confederate center to attack with all vigor, which would at least have prevented any assistance being sent to the defeated left. But the attack was tardy and feeble, the only real fighting being done by Sherman's brigade, which crossed the Run and got to McDowell. But as soon as the heavy firing warned Beauregard and Johnston of what was going on, they had promptly abandoned the movement on Centerville and sent their troops to the left, undelayed by the faint Federal attack on their center, and effected the changes of position which enabled them in the action of the afternoon to bring their combined weight to bear so unexpectedly and effectively on McDowell's right. The center of this later action also was at the Henry House, and Franklin's command bore its full part of the brunt of this as of the morning's battle and lost very heavily. The desperate fighting of his artillery by the gallant Ricketts was one of the brilliant features of the day.

## REORGANIZING.

When the army fell back on Washington, Franklin rendered especially valuable services in the reorganization and preparations which followed, and was assigned to the command of a division in McDowell's Corps in the defense of Washington. An interesting incident of this long period of much necessary preparation and of much hesitation was a conference between President Lincoln and Generals Franklin, Meigs, and McDowell. The delays in action of the general-in-chief were followed by his illness, and, to be prepared for action in the contingency of his death, Mr. Lincoln called together Franklin and McDowell as among the most competent commanders and Meigs as quartermaster-general and a most competent officer, and submitted to them a statement of the essential facts of the situation as known to him, the forces in hand, their positions, the state of public sentiment, and the political conditions, and asked their judgment as to the plan of movement which could be most speedily undertaken and the time at which they could be prepared to move if ordered. The next day they submitted a written recommendation embodying a plan which, unknown to them then and until long afterwards, Mr. Lincoln had already suggested to General McClellan and which had been by him set aside.

## PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN.

During the winter of 1862 it was decided that McClellan should operate against Richmond by way of the Peninsula, his troops being moved by water to Fortress Monroe. From this point there were two lines of ap-

proach: the one by the James River (afterward taken by Grant, and preferred by McClellan, but then closed by Confederate gunboats and batteries), and the other by the York and Pamunkey Rivers as a line of supply. On the 6th of April he had landed on the Peninsula over 102,000 men present for active duty. McDowell's Corps, in which Franklin had a division, was at Fredericksburg en route by land, but here it was halted to avoid uncovering Washington. At McClellan's urgent request, Franklin's division was put on transports and sent him, arriving April 22, but it was left chafing on board until May 5, when, getting his orders at last, Franklin moved up to the mouth of the Pamunkey, and landing at Eltham, received a fierce attack by Longstreet's troops, where he was covering Johnston's left in his deliberate withdrawal from Yorktown to Richmond. This attack he repelled, and firmly established himself on the Confederate left, near the point which was to become the base of supply for the Army of the Potomac, whose movement up the Peninsula had been very gradual. On the 9th of May the Confederate ironclad Virginia, or Merrimac, had been destroyed by her commander, leaving the James open to the Federal Navy; but its line of advance was not available to McClellan, even if he still desired it, since the authorities at Washington would not hear to the uncovering of that city and required that McDowell's strong corps should, if McClellan were to have it at all, so move as to keep in its front, and connecting with McClellan, form his right to the north of Richmond and menacing the enemy's left. It was also necessary for McClellan to place his main force on the westerly or Richmond side of the Chickahominy, which was the only

considerable natural obstacle to his approach. This compelled him to advance along and astride the Chickahominy, with a strong force on its easterly side both to reach out toward McDowell and also to protect the base at White House. He now formed his troops into provisional corps, and Franklin was placed in command of the Sixth Corps on the 18th of May with Smith and Slocum as division commanders. The corps of Franklin and Porter formed McClellan's right on the northeasterly side of the Chickahominy, and after some fighting took positions reaching north of Richmond to await the arrival of McDowell, when they were expected to cross by bridges to the southwesterly side and join in the attack on that city. On the 24th of May McClellan was thus in position waiting for McDowell, without whom he did not consider himself strong enough to attack, and McDowell had been ordered to march from Fredericksburg on the 26th, and on that day he did march out eight useless miles.

#### AT FAIR OAKS.

For Johnston was in command at Richmond, well understanding the situation and the man he was dealing with. Jackson was in the upper part of the Shenandoah Valley with a strong force, and early in May he began to move. After a series of long marches and several engagements, on the 24th of May, just when McClellan's plans seemed at last going to his mind, Jackson appeared at Winchester; Washington was alarmed; McDowell's advance from Fredericksburg was countermanded, half his troops sent up to the valley to help catch Jackson, and thenceforth McClellan must get on without him. It

behooved him to fight Johnston before Jackson could come to his help. But only two of his five corps were on the fighting side of the Chickahominy, and only Bottom's bridge was available for crossing. By the 28th Sumner, who lay nearest the river and was the center of the army, had built two bridges for his command, but the two bridges prepared for Franklin and Porter, who were at Mechanicsville and Gaines' Mill, were not yet laid, and the army was divided by a treacherous stream, without crossing which it could not sustain such an attack as could be delivered, and in rear of its cut off right wing was its vast accumulation of supplies which must be protected. Johnston considered that it behooved him to strike the left wing of McClellan's army while yet it was divided, and on the 30th of May his preparations were made. That night came the torrential rain which put the Chickahominy in flood and made its borders a morass. Early next morning Johnston attacked at Fair Oaks or Seven Pines, and pressed the Federal troops back, until Sumner, hearing the guns, without waiting for his orders, marched his columns to his bridges, which were kept in place in the torrent by the weight of the men, crossed, and struck the blow which saved the day and recovered the lost positions. Johnston was wounded, and Lee took his place, which he kept till Appomattox.

#### GAINES' MILLS.

And now came a month of delay in which McClellan seems to have halted between two opinions, calling, on the one hand, for more troops, and promising to cross the Chickahominy and attack as soon as the waters fell

and the mud dried; on the other, he meditated transferring his army and supply line to the James; but nothing decisive was done until Lee settled the question. This great general planned to leave Magruder and Huger with about twenty-five thousand men between McClellan's left wing and Richmond while he took the rest of his force to the north side of the Chickahominy, called Jackson to join him, and then swept down that bank of the river, crushing McClellan's right, and planting himself in his rear and on his line of supply. To deceive all concerned and keep any reinforcements to McClellan from the front of Washington, he ostentatiously sent a division from Richmond to Jackson, but at the same time ordering him to move secretly and swiftly by interior lines to the proper point on the Federal right. He left Port Republic on the 17th of June, and not a Federal officer knew of his march until on the 25th he reached Ashland, twelve miles from Richmond, the very day McClellan was advancing his pickets on the Williamsburg road. On the 26th Lee struck Porter's Corps at Beaver Dam Creek. Porter held Longstreet in check, but Jackson turned his flank. And now McClellan decided to transfer Porter, as he had done Franklin, to the south side of the Chickahominy and his whole army to the James. But it was necessary to gain time to move guns and supplies, and for this Jackson must be held in check. Porter with his corps of twenty-seven thousand was assigned the task, and next morning the battle of Gaines' Mills began; but it presently appeared that he had two-thirds of Lee's army pressing him, and Franklin sent Slocum's division of his corps to his aid. That day saw one of the bloodiest battles of the war. During the day Franklin also sus-

tained and repulsed an attack on Smith's division at Golding's farm. During the night the troops were crossed over, the bridges destroyed, and the march to the James began. The day before the battle of Gaines' Mills Franklin occupied the right of the Federal line on the Richmond side of the river, at Golding's farm. Besides sending Slocum to Porter's aid, when the latter fell back to the bridges, Franklin placed his artillery in position to command the opposite bank and used it with such effect that the enemy fell back to find another line of attack. The day following Gaines' Mills, the enemy made a furious assault on Franklin's right, where Hancock of Smith's division was posted, but was handsomely repulsed.

On the 28th the retrograde movement began and Franklin was its rear guard. During the day he was again attacked by some Georgia regiments, many of whom were captured, among them Colonel — afterward Justice — Lamar. The day following, June 29th, Franklin ascertained that the enemy had repaired some of the bridges across the Chickahominy and was advancing in strong force on Savage's Station. Slocum's division, having suffered severely at Gaines' Mills, had been sent across White Oak Swamp. By some misunderstanding, Heintzelman's Corps had gone on, leaving a gap of a mile between Franklin and Sumner, neither of whom knew of its departure until the enemy began to appear where it should have been. Franklin promptly put his remaining division, Smith's, in position and notified Sumner, who formed for his support. At four in the afternoon the Confederates attacked and fought stubbornly until night fell, but were completely driven from the field. That



night Franklin crossed the White Oak Swamp by the one road then known, and took position to prevent its passage by the Confederates. The next day, June 30, was a critical one in this movement to change base. The trains were still on the way to Harrison's Landing, and the marching columns were converging on Malvern.

Lee, perplexed at first, had discovered the true character of McClellan's movement, and now sought to concentrate his whole force on the latter's line of march, while it was yet in progress. Longstreet, Magruder, and Huger were sent hurrying south from Richmond by the several roads leading thence. Jackson was making for the pass of the White Oak Swamp. The natural meeting point of Lee's columns was at or near Glendale, in Franklin's rear and directly on McClellan's route. Could Longstreet have established himself at Glendale or on the neighboring roads, he would have cut McClellan's line and compelled him to fight at great disadvantage, and would probably have compelled Franklin, placed between two fires, to let Jackson through. Could the latter have crossed the White Oak Swamp in force, he would have forced a junction with Longstreet and Magruder, and Lee's army would have been united and in a position to make trouble. And this was what he strenuously essayed to do. With nearly half the Confederate Army and a great number of guns, Jackson came to the crossing. With Smith's division of his own corps and Richardson's division of Sumner's and Nagle's brigade, Franklin was ordered to defend it to the last, he having already put Slocum's division in position at Glendale, where it was heavily engaged in that most important action by which Longstreet was held in check until Frank-



lin should be ready to fall back after seeing all the rest safe. Under screen of the forests lining the swamp, Jackson massed his troops and his artillery, and opened a heavy bombardment on Franklin's position; but he could make no impression. As often as he tried to push across Franklin swept him back, and stood immovable throughout the day and until the last of his great rear guard work was done and the rest of the army was already in its wisely chosen position at Malvern Hill, where it was necessary to give battle to the Confederates who had concentrated upon this point, both to give them the severe check which McClellan was now fully prepared to do, and also under its cover to allow the last of the trains to reach the new base on the James. To this position Franklin now fell back by a short road General Smith had explored during the day, and took his station on the right, where he bore his part in the great battle that followed; the weight of which, however, fell on the center and left of McClellan's lines. And here ended the serious fighting on the Peninsula.

While McClellan had been operating on the Peninsula the troops disposed for the defense of Washington especially and in West Virginia were collected, and formed a second army under the command of General John Pope, who, at the time McClellan's troops were transferred from the Peninsula north, was fronting toward Richmond and toward the passes of the Shenandoah with his base at Centerville. As McClellan's troops came north they were ordered to report at once to Pope, and became a part of his command. Early in July Franklin had been made a major-general, and in the reorganization of the Army of the Potomac he was as-

signed to the command of the Sixth Corps, with which he landed at Alexandria July 26, 1862. Pope was at this time making that confused series of movements which preceded the second battle of Bull Run, in his attempt to ascertain the precise whereabouts of Lee's forces, which were rapidly pushing north with Jackson in the valley, of whose whereabouts there was no doubt when he struck Pope's rear and line of supply at Manassas Junction. Halleck ordered Franklin to camp and refit, expressing the opinion that no apprehension need be felt regarding Pope, and doubting if Franklin's Corps would be needed by him; but on the 27th, parties of the enemy having appeared at Centerville, Franklin was ordered to prepare with all haste for a forward movement, for which he required animals for his artillery and trains, and on the 29th he started with his entire corps for Centerville, soon meeting fugitives from Pope's command. With a correct apprehension of the possible developments of Pope's retrograde movement, he sent a brigade and battery under Colonel Torbert to take position at the intersection of the Little River and Warrenton pikes. He passed through Centerville, and three miles out he met Pope falling back, who ordered him to return to Centerville, where he remained through the 30th, and from the time of meeting Pope was his rear guard until two days later his forces were in the defenses of Washington. On the night of the 30th Stuart with his cavalry made an attempt to strike Pope's trains in the neighborhood of Fairfax Court House, destroy them, and plant himself between Pope and Washington. But here he came upon the brigade and battery under Torbert, which Franklin had posted at the right point, and after a brisk night

fight was driven off, and an all-important position was saved and held. On the 2d of September Franklin with his corps re-entered Alexandria.

Lee moved steadily northward, and on the 3d of September crossed the Potomac, Jackson in the advance, near Leesburg. Pope had been relieved and McClellan placed in command, and on the 5th he started to locate Lee and bring him to stand and fight. He moved out from the defenses of Washington upon five parallel roads, covering both Washington and Baltimore and giving a front which was reasonably certain to touch Lee's line of march at some point.

Franklin moved on the road nearest the Potomac, and his command constituted the left wing of McClellan's force. The latter fully believed that Lee intended to strike into Pennsylvania, but Halleck feared that his advance in that direction was a mere ruse to draw McClellan far from Washington, and then, turning his left, slip in behind him. The movement, and especially that of Franklin's column, was much hampered in its progress by this apprehension. Lee was moving steadily north behind the screen of the range of South Mountain, toward which McClellan was cautiously advancing with a constant lookout to his left and rear.

#### WINS LINCOLN'S THANKS.

The principal passes through this north and south range were Turner's Gap at the north and Crampton's at the south, both strong positions and strongly occupied. Reno's column was directed against Turner's Gap, which he carried after a severe and brilliant action. Franklin's

column was directed against Crampton's Gap, and about noon of September 14th his advance came upon the enemy strongly occupying a most advantageous position. He immediately made his dispositions and attacked in a most brilliant manner, and won the "completest victory gained up to that time by any part of the Army of the Potomac." A distinguishing feature of Franklin as a commander was his broad grasp and thorough comprehension of the nature and of the magnitude of the work he found before him, and then the unhesitating employment of enough force, acting at once and together, to accomplish his purpose. He studied his conditions carefully and with profound military intelligence, calculated the necessary weight of his blow and delivered it in all its instant might. Perhaps nothing will convey a more complete illustration of the man in free and wholly responsible action, of his soldierly qualities, his mental clearness, his modest reserve, and his lucid conciseness of style, than the following extract from his official report of this engagement:

"The enemy was strongly posted on both sides of the road, which made a steep ascent through a narrow defile, wooded on both sides and offering great advantages of cover and position. Their advance was posted near the base of the mountain, in the rear of a stone wall, stretching to the right of the road at a point where the ascent was gradual and for the most part over open fields. Eight guns had been stationed on the road and at points on the sides and summit of the mountain to the left of the pass. It was evident that the position could be carried only by an infantry attack. Accordingly, I directed Major-General Slocum to advance his division through

the village of Burkittsville and commence the attack upon the right. Wolcott's First Maryland Battery was stationed on the left and to the rear of the village, and maintained a steady fire on the positions of the enemy until they were assailed and carried by our troops. Smith's division was placed in reserve on the east side of the village, and held in readiness to coöperate with General Slocum or support his attack as occasion might require. Captain Ayres' Battery of this division was posted on a commanding ground to the left of the reserves, and kept up an uninterrupted fire on the principal battery of the enemy until the latter was driven from its position.

"The advance of General Slocum was made with admirable steadiness through a well-directed fire from the batteries on the mountain, the brigade of Colonel Bartlett taking the lead, and followed at proper intervals by the brigades of General Newton and Colonel Torbert. Upon fully determining the enemy's position, the skirmishers were withdrawn and Colonel Bartlett became engaged along his entire line. He maintained his ground steadily under a severe fire for some time at a manifest disadvantage, until reënforced by two regiments of General Newton's brigade upon his right, and the brigade of Colonel Torbert and the two remaining regiments of Newton's on his left. The line of battle thus formed, an immediate charge was ordered, and most gallantly executed. The men swept forward with a cheer, over the stone wall, dislodging the enemy, and pursuing him up the mountain-side to the crest of the hill and down the opposite slope. This single charge, sustained as it was over a great distance, and on a rough ascent of unusual steepness, was

decisive. The enemy was driven in the utmost confusion from a position of strength and allowed no opportunity for even an attempt to rally, until the pass was cleared and in the possession of our troops.

"When the division under General Slocum first became actively engaged, I directed General Brooks' brigade, of Smith's division, to advance upon the left of the road and dislodge the enemy from the woods upon Slocum's flank. The movement was promptly and steadily made under a severe artillery fire. General Brooks occupied the woods after a slight resistance, and then advanced, simultaneously with General Slocum, rapidly and in good order, to the crest of the mountain. The victory was complete, and its achievement followed so rapidly upon the first attack that the enemy's reserves, although pushed forward at the double-quick, arrived but in time to participate in the flight and add confusion to the rout. Four hundred prisoners, from 17 different organizations, 700 stand of arms, 1 piece of artillery, and 3 stand of colors were captured."

Franklin fully earned the personal thanks so cordially given him a few days later by President Lincoln. Had Franklin's advance to this point been unhampered by the apprehensions of the authorities in respect to matters on his left and rear, he would have been in abundant time to relieve Harper's Ferry; but this was now out of the question. While he was breaking through to its relief it was surrendered.

#### AT ANTIETAM.

West of the wall of the South Mountain range Antietam Creek runs southerly into the Potomac, and here

Lee was brought to a stand by the Federal successes at Crampton's and Turner's Gaps. Taking his defensive position on the west side of the creek, which was crossed in his front by four bridges, McClellan on the east side made his dispositions for attack, placing strong commands in position to cross at each of these bridges, Burnside being at the lower bridge opposite Lee's right. The plan of battle involved Burnside's strong attack at that point, while Sumner and Hooker were to move up the stream and cross at the fifth bridge, above Lee's left, which was under Jackson. Sumner and Hooker executed the movement assigned them and came upon Jackson near the Dunker Church, and here the fight raged heavily and long. In spite of repeated and peremptory orders, Burnside did not attack for many hours, and so long was his movement delayed that Lee, becoming confident, moved a considerable force from his right, which Burnside had not engaged, to his left under Jackson, so that at this point he was able to quite hold his own against Sumner and Hooker. Meanwhile Franklin, moving with great promptness and rapidity, had come up from below McClellan's left from Crampton's Gap, and was ordered to cross by the upper bridge and reinforce Sumner and Hooker. When he reached their position their troops were exhausted by their long struggle, had suffered heavy losses, were somewhat disorganized, and matters were at a standstill. Franklin sensed the situation and at once put his entire command in a better position on commanding ground, in formation for attack with his whole force, and placed his artillery where it most effectually commanded Jackson's position. As Sumner ranked Franklin, and McClellan was not on that part of



the field, Franklin was necessarily under his orders, and when he reported that he was ready to advance, and expressed his confidence of promptly and thoroughly routing the enemy, Sumner, from the severity with which he had been made to suffer, had become so doubtful of the result of any attack that he forbade Franklin's advance. The latter at once sent to McClellan, stating his readiness to attack and his belief in its success, and urging McClellan to come in person and examine the situation for himself. McClellan came; but no urgency or assurance on Franklin's part availed to secure him the magnificent opportunity which he clearly saw, and which from his position and from the at least equal exhaustion of Jackson's troops with that of Sumner's he felt certain must be successful, and he had the chagrin to be condemned to comparative inactivity during the remainder of the day, with victory, as he believed, at his hand.

Meantime Burnside had finally gotten into action, and effected a lodgment opposite Lee's right on the west side of the stream, but after severe fighting he practically only held the position. His advances had been thrown back. Lee's troops from Harper's Ferry arrived. The next morning Franklin was urgent to be allowed to make his proposed attack, but McClellan was apprehensive that he was much outnumbered, and, hoping for a reinforcement of Pennsylvania militia next day, ordered Franklin to wait, promising that on the arrival of the expected reinforcements he should make his attack. The troops did not arrive, but "next day" Lee had gone. It was never Franklin's fashion to send in his troops in dribblets, and his plan here was to mass his forty guns on a commanding ground, thoroughly sweep Jackson's position with



their sufficient fire, and then to deliver his blow with his whole force at once. Later knowledge fully justified his apprehension of the situation and the undoubted efficacy of the attack as he proposed to make it. When it was ascertained that Lee had retired, Franklin again urged that he be allowed to pursue with all vigor, as his troops were all in good condition; but here again he was overruled.

Lee fell leisurely back across the river and moved southward. McClellan followed, and the two armies maneuvered for position until McClellan had his headquarters at Warrenton with his army massed so as to threaten both the Shenandoah passes and the more easterly lines to Richmond. Lee was uncertain of McClellan's design, and kept Jackson in strong force in the Shenandoah, while Longstreet was at Culpepper, his two wings being thus divided by long marches. McClellan's view was that Lee's army was the proper objective, and that its destruction or complete defeat was of far greater importance than the capture of even Richmond. Nothing could be sounder. It was the theory which, applied by the always ready fighting qualities of Grant and his generals, won the day at last. Richmond was important to them mainly because Lee had to care for its safety. McClellan was now in position to place himself between Lee's wings and strike each in turn with his whole force before it could be helped by the other, than which no better plan could be devised. But while preparing for this movement he was again relieved from the command of the Army of the Potomac, which was turned over to Burnside, who turned his back upon McClellan's line of action and began to consider what line of advance he

would take on Richmond. His views were not in favor at Washington, but he was allowed to take his way, and he began his movements for an advance by way of Fredericksburg. McClellan's plan ultimately included an advance on Richmond after he should have delivered a crushing blow to Lee's army, either by way of Fredericksburg or by transfer again to the Peninsula, if the Fredericksburg line proved bad for supplies. Burnside took command the 7th of November. For the purposes of his campaign, he organized the army into three grand divisions. The right grand division, under Sumner, marched to Falmouth, opposite Fredericksburg, where it arrived November 17th. There was but a slight force of the enemy posted near the town, and Sumner could easily have crossed and desired to do so. His orders did not contemplate it, and, on asking permission, he was ordered to remain on the north side of the river until all the troops were in their positions — an inaction of which Lee took the promptest advantage. Hooker commanded the center grand division, and moved to take position at Sumner's left. Franklin commanded the left grand division, composed of the First and Sixth Corps, commanded by Reynolds and W. F. Smith, and took position at Hooker's left below the town and opposite the heights, which, curving forward toward their right, end at the Massaponax. And here they waited for the pontoons to arrive for bridging the stream, which was now rising from recent rains. Presently Longstreet's Corps occupied the heights back of Fredericksburg and to the right, where he had abundant leisure to completely fortify chosen positions until they were no longer assailable in front. Jackson was moved down to Longstreet's

right, and occupied the heights below the town to Massaponax River. After some consideration of a crossing at Skinker's Neck, some twelve miles below, Burnside gave up any idea of flanking Lee out of Fredericksburg, and determined to attack in front in the alleged belief that his attack would be unexpected, the enemy surprised and unprepared, and his positions readily carried — a view in which few competent soldiers concurred.

#### FREDERICKSBURG.\*

On the 10th of December Franklin was ordered to have his command at a point a mile and a half below Fredericksburg ready to begin crossing at daylight on the 11th on the bridges to be already prepared. Smith's Sixth Corps, being the strongest, was to take the advance. The heads of his columns promptly reached the river before daylight; but only a few pontoons of each bridge had been placed. They were not finished until after noon. Smith's Corps was crossed rapidly, but, the bridges directly opposite Fredericksburg for the crossing of Sumner's troops not having been completed, Franklin was ordered to draw back all of his force but one brigade to keep the bridge heads, and await the completion of the arrangements in front of the town. The last hope of a surprise was gone. What was to be gained now must be fought for against 78,000 men admirably posted in

\* The writer of this sketch has dealt in complete detail with Franklin's part in this battle in a small volume:

General William B. Franklin and the operations of the Left Wing at the Battle of Fredericksburg, December 13, 1862. With a map.

Belknap & Warfield, Hartford, Conn., 1900.

strong and well fortified positions. On the 12th of December Franklin crossed his entire force and disposed it most judiciously. He at once made a careful personal examination of his entire front, and he knew the impossible work cut out for Sumner. Franklin soon perceived the one reasonable possibility of the situation, to wit: that the only chance of Burnside's success lay in such an attack on Lee's left and in Franklin's front as should break through and take him on the hills in his rear. Franklin had Jackson in front of him with 30,000 or more men and good artillery. But if he could have his bridges properly cared for, so as to have free use of his force, he could prepare his attack with the fire of 80 guns and launch his mighty blow with 40,000 men. It seemed the plain common sense of the situation if the battle must be delivered. Smith and Reynolds, than whom were no better corps commanders, wholly agreed with his view. At 5 o'clock that day Burnside rode with Franklin over his lines, and then, in the presence of Smith and Reynolds, Franklin carefully explained his plans and urged his attack as the one hope of success. He asked that two divisions from one of Hooker's corps, which were on the north side near his bridges, should be sent at once to relieve Smith in guarding the bridges, leaving him free to attack with his entire corps. Smith and Reynolds both fully understood that Burnside fully assented. Franklin meant to attack at daylight, and it was necessary that the additional troops asked should be crossed and placed as early as possible during the night, that his formations might be duly made. He was urgent for immediate orders. Burnside promised he should have them in two or three hours, as soon as he returned

to his headquarters, or at any rate before midnight, but forbade action until he had received them in writing. Franklin at once gave his necessary preparatory instructions to Smith and Reynolds, notified Hooker's division of the orders they were about to receive and to be prepared to move, and then awaited his promised orders. But Burnside went to bed and wrote no orders till morning. Franklin was "sleepless with anxiety" and sent repeated requests for his orders. No orders came, and at midnight he sent an aid to Burnside asking for his orders; he was told they were in preparation and would be sent forthwith; other messages were sent, but none of them reached Burnside until morning, although their due receipt at headquarters was properly acknowledged. At 7.30 next morning Franklin received by the hand of General Hardie of Burnside's staff — not an order to put Stoneman at the bridges and in support and to hurl his whole force at a chosen point in front and go through, but: "Keep your whole command in position for a rapid movement down the old Richmond road; and you will send out at once a division at least, to pass below Smithfield, to seize, if possible, the heights near Captain Hamilton's on this side of the Massaponax, taking care to keep it well supported and its line of retreat open." Franklin was tied up. Smith's Corps was in line on his right and guarding the bridges, which it could not leave until relieved or Lee's center and left had retreated. He was to send one division to attack, support it, and keep its retreat assured, and yet hold his "whole command in readiness for a rapid movement down the old Richmond road." There was no smashing of Lee's right in these directions. Franklin and both his corps commanders

could construe this order as directing nothing more than a reconnoissance in force, and in this General Hardie agreed. There was nothing for it but to leave Smith in his position, send a division out of Reynolds' Corps at his left to seize Hamilton's heights, support it, keep its way out open, and wait for that unknown event which was to require his rapid movement on the road; all of which is explicable only on the theory that Burnside believed or hoped that, instead of more than half Lee's army, Franklin had in front of him no force that would undertake to disturb him; that, therefore, after seizing Hamilton's heights with a division, his whole command would remain disengaged and ready to move swiftly down the road. It would seem as if Burnside expected to rout Lee's left out of its position on the heights in rear of the town, and then have Franklin pass his right and fall upon his rear and his retreating troops, seizing a point meantime which should put him in a position to make this rapid movement the more readily and speedily.

Franklin's troops were necessarily in the extended order in which Burnside had found and left them the day before; the only order which was at once defensive and from which any formation could readily be made for attack or movement in any direction. The divisions of Stoneman's Corps of Hooker's grand division which he had asked to have ordered over the evening before to replace Smith's Corps, which was to be formed for the grand attack, were still on the north side of the river, and Smith could not leave his position without uncovering the bridges over against which lay the fiery Hood. Reynolds' corps was in line at Smith's left, and in his front were Jackson's divisions, and to his left and formed

across his flank was Stuart. Franklin promptly obeyed his orders. Meade's division of Reynolds' corps, being nearest the point indicated, was ordered to make the attack, supported by Gibbon's division on his right and Doubleday's on his left. At 7.40 General Hardie wired his chief that the enemy was advancing to attack the left. As Meade moved toward the heights where Jackson lay waiting in the woods, Stuart's artillery opened upon his left so severe an enfilading fire with eighteen guns that he had to halt until Doubleday deployed his division to the left, to face Stuart, silence his fire and prevent a threatened assault from that direction, both on the flank and on the bridges. Advancing again until near the slopes, Meade suddenly received the crossing fire of twenty-one guns on the heights on his right and five batteries on his left front. And now everyone understood that the woods in front were full of waiting infantry holding their fire for close range. Therefore the batteries must be silenced, the enemy's lines pounded with the guns, and reinforcements brought up to closely support his thrust into the strong lines in front. Gibbon's division deployed for attack on Meade's right, Smith's left being advanced to connect; Birney and Stoneman, for whom Franklin had asked in vain the night before, were at last ordered over the river. After a severe artillery duel of an hour and a half, Franklin silenced the Confederate batteries, and Meade at once advanced in most gallant style, under a tremendous fire, broke the first line after desperate fighting, and would not be denied until they struck the second line and were being pressed on both flanks by the mass into which they had ploughed. Doubleday to the left was holding Stuart off, Gibbon to



the right had made a gallant attack, but was unable to advance as far, Smith's corps at his right was deployed against the enemy covering his entire front and pressing to find a weak spot to cut the army in two and destroy its bridges, the reënforcing troops from over the river were not yet up and available to take Meade's place and carry on the attack, and Meade had to fall back. And now the Confederates took the offensive and made a vigorous onslaught, but were checked after stubborn fighting.

Meade's attack and its results clearly demonstrated several things: the success he gained showed that had Franklin's plan of the day before been adopted and executed as planned, Stoneman's and Birney's divisions brought over the night before and so placed that Franklin could put both his corps in formation for a simultaneous attack prepared by his well-placed batteries, he would probably have broken and turned Lee's right. Accidents aside, this seems reasonably certain. The desperate fighting of the divisions employed, the failure of the attack as ordered by Burnside, and the number of the Confederate troops making the counter attack, and the stubborn fighting necessary to repel it, showed that no less an attack and in no other manner than that proposed by Franklin had a chance of success. The smashing of Lee's right of near half his army required something very different both in the dispositions of troops and the weight of attack from sending one division to seize a point if it could, keeping its line of retreat secure, and the "whole command" in readiness for a rapid movement on the road. And the ordering an attack by but one division, with instructions to support it and keep its line of retreat open, meant and could mean only one of two things; that the man order-



ing it wanted a reconnoissance in force, to find a weak spot if he could, and then act according to circumstances; or else that he believed the enemy's line so weakly held that no greater force would be necessary; and it also indicated that in case the assault were unsuccessful he should not employ more of his forces at that point, but depend for results on operations elsewhere. Sumner, who was assaulting Fredericksburg directly in front, had been ordered to seize a similar position in his front by a similar force. The occupation of the one by Franklin and the other by Sumner Burnside hoped would "compel the enemy to evacuate the whole ridge between these points." But the attack as he ordered it could have succeeded only against a comparatively weak force. Certainly the attack as he ordered it must have been a purely tentative operation, subordinate to and while waiting for other chief operations, to wit: the direct attack on Fredericksburg.

General Hardie of Burnside's staff, who brought Franklin his order at 7.45 in the morning, remained on the field with him throughout the day, sending his chief frequent messages by wire completely descriptive of the situation, and getting no reply, no order or suggestion until the middle of the short winter afternoon. At 2.15 P. M., he wired Burnside that Meade and Gibbon had been driven back, that Jackson was attacking, that "things do not look well on Reynolds' front, still we'll have new troops in soon." At 2.25, while engaged all along his lines, Franklin received a message from Burnside saying: "Your instructions of this morning are so far modified as to require an advance upon the heights immediately in your front." What was the situation? Franklin, in

the extended order in which Burnside had left him the day before, and in such formation that he could have put his troops in column for the "rapid movement down the old Richmond road," had made the attack ordered and as ordered, which had been repulsed after long and hard fighting, and was now fully engaged in repelling a counter attack.

#### BURNSIDE'S COURSE.

Burnside had made his main great assault on the heights in rear of Fredericksburg and been utterly defeated. Division upon division, under the most experienced and gallant soldiers of the army, had flung themselves against that position with devoted bravery simply to be swept away. Just at the moment when Franklin's attack with Meade's division had failed and he was stopping Jackson's rush, the survivors of that fearful slaughter had fallen back from their impossible task in utter exhaustion. Any competent man would have known that what these men and their dead comrades, who lay so near the goal, could not do, could not be done. But Burnside was determined to repeat the trial. He ordered "Fighting Joe Hooker," commanding his center grand division, to take Butterfield's corps and carry the heights. He promptly formed for the attack, but when he saw the work before him, the difficult line of approach, and learned from Hancock and French the nature of the ground over which they had led their men that morning, he knew any attack was doomed. He sent a staff officer to Burnside to state his views and to ask a counter order. Burnside refused. And now Hooker did one of the bravest acts of his brave life: so sure was he of the useless slaughter,

he imperiled his reputation for courage by going in person to Burnside to dissuade him from the further attempt. His only reply was: "That height must be carried this evening." Hooker returned, and the scenes of the morning were repeated; the same gallant assault, the same desperate struggle, the same annihilating fire from positions which could not be reached, until Hooker having, in his own words, lost "about as many men as he was ordered to sacrifice," drew back from the slopes where in a few hours had been lost seven thousand six hundred and twenty men.

It was when Burnside ordered Hooker to the second assault that he sent Franklin the order at 2.25 to advance on the heights in his immediate front. Franklin's experience of the morning had shown that no advance on his part could succeed unless made in the manner he had asked and been denied; an effective advance required an entire new disposition of his troops and a proper formation of those told off for the attack; but they were all engaged in fighting as they stood. If Burnside meant his order to initiate any such effective attack as Franklin had planned the day before, it was too late by many hours. Such an attack required time and freedom from the pressure of the enemy to prepare. If he meant it for a general advance of Franklin's line to exert a general pressure, he was already pressing against or being pressed by an outnumbering force strongly posted. Only ten minutes before receiving this order General Hardie had wired his chief of Meade's and Gibbon's defeat and of Jackson's counter, and that "things do not look well on Reynolds' front." But on receipt of the new instruction he wired: "Dispatch received. Franklin will do his best. New

troops gone in — will report again soon.” Franklin at once conferred with his corps commanders, and they were unanimous that under the conditions of time and the sharp pressure of the enemy no effective attack could be then organized, and that all that could be done was being done, and that their hands were full. At 3 P. M. Hardie wired: “Reynolds seems to be holding his own. Things look somewhat better.” About the same time an aid came from Burnside saying Sumner was hard pressed on the right, and requesting Franklin to make a diversion in his favor if he could. Franklin replied that he would do his best. At 3.40 Hardie wired: “Gibbon’s and Meade’s divisions are badly used up, and I fear another advance on the enemy on our left cannot be made this afternoon. Doubleday’s division will replace Meade’s as soon as it can be collected, and if done in time of course another attack will be made. The enemy are in force on our left towards Hamilton’s and are threatening the safety of that portion of our line. . . . Just as soon as the left is safe, our forces here will be prepared for a front attack, but it may be too late this afternoon. Indeed, we are engaged in front anyhow.” At 4.30 he wired: “The enemy is still in force on our left and front. An attack on our batteries in front has been repulsed. A new attack has just opened on our left, but the left is safe, though it is too late to advance either to the left or front.” At this moment Jackson had determined to put in his whole force against Franklin in the hope of driving him back on his bridges, and had already put Stuart and D. H. Hill in motion against Doubleday, which was the new attack on the left referred to in General Hardie’s dispatch, and began advancing his artillery,

but the late hour and Franklin's heavy fire caused Jackson to countermand his orders: "A wise determination," says the Count de Paris. And soon the night ended the day. Franklin had lost 4,962 men, and had inflicted on Jackson a loss of 5,364.

Franklin's plans, the orders under which he acted, his actions, and Burnside's constant knowledge of them have been given in so much detail because of what followed some weeks later, and also because they give a clear picture of a great force, an important part of an army, set against a greater force of the enemy, with a commander who wholly understood his situation and also the controlling part of his force might and should have had in the whole day's work, who thoroughly planned the only possible and fully adequate attack, which he was not allowed to make, and, in executing the orders he received, was compelled to attempt with an inadequate force, a single division, the real substance of what he had planned to do with no less than six divisions, supported by at least two others, compelled to keep to his original extended line, and ready to move rapidly at any moment down the road. This man, who in his own way, properly supported, could probably have broken Lee's right and sent him out of Fredericksburg, was made to stand ready for something else all day, and his real use was to prevent Lee from swinging his right around, and perhaps from sending troops from his right to Marye's heights had they been needed — as they were not. Longstreet's artillery and four brigades of his infantry sufficed to hold them against Sumner's and Hooker's grand divisions successively.

Shortly after the battle General Burnside said to Gen-

erals Smith and Reynolds, Franklin's corps commanders: "I made a mistake in my order to Franklin; I should have directed him to carry the hill at Hamilton's at all hazards."

Burnside was still determined to carry Marye's heights and ordered an attack by the Ninth Corps on the same stone walls the next day, to be led by himself in person. But he was fortunately dissuaded by his grand division and corps commanders, and the army fell back.\* Franklin recrossed his command on the night of the 15th. Burnside brought back to the north side of the river a defeated and despondent army: men who had done the utmost of human endeavor against impossible positions and seen life sacrificed to no reasonable purpose. He was not long in being made to feel the want of confidence in his ability to command which ran through from highest to lowest — the same want which he had felt in himself and avowed at the outset. He projected a movement to turn the Confederate left by crossing some seven miles below Fredericksburg, and had already sent a cavalry column to cut their communications, when the Washington authorities, advised of the distrust, which they doubtless appreciated if they did not share, ordered him to make no movement without advising the President. The raid was stopped and the scheme abandoned. Feeling the distrust on the one hand and the pressure of public demand for results, he resolved on another wager of battle, crossing at Bank's Ford, six miles above Fredericksburg, and taking it in rear. As all the fords were well watched

\* General Rush B. Hawkins seems to have been the first to openly oppose General Burnside's purpose.

and the ground open, secrecy was impossible, and to conceal his intended point of crossing he feigned on several both above and below. On the 19th of January, 1863, the grand divisions of Franklin and Sumner took position near Banks' Ford, the artillery was put in position, the pontoons brought up, Couch with his corps was sent to demonstrate below the town, and all was made ready for the attempt. But on the night of the 20th a furious storm came on, the physical conditions brought matters to a stand, Lee had not been deceived, and stood waiting in order on the other side. The army floundered back to its camp, and the "Mud Campaign" was over.

And now it would seem as if, all hope of successful action in the near future being gone, the consciousness of distrust and the demoralization of the army made the position of the commanding general intolerable to himself, and he resolved upon a step so extraordinary under the circumstances as to indicate a condition bordering on desperation. For six weeks he had accepted the responsibility for the ill-planned, ill-managed, desperate attack at Fredericksburg, and recognized the undoubted ability and faithfulness with which his subordinates had executed his orders, and the magnificent courage and steadiness of his troops in their repeated hopeless assaults. He had assured Franklin of his confidence and expressed his gratitude for his soldierly loyalty; he declared that he alone "had held up his hand"; that he was going to resign the command and recommend Franklin as his successor. Suddenly all was changed. His first act on getting back to camp was to prepare an order dismissing from the army Generals Hooker, Brooks, Cochrane, and Newton, and relieving from their commands Generals



Franklin, W. F. Smith, Sturgis, Ferrero, and Colonel Taylor. He took this in person to the President and demanded its approval or the acceptance of his resignation. He made no charge of incompetency or disobedience or failure in duty, but only of a lack of confidence in himself: a reason which would have dismissed or relieved pretty much all the officers of the Army of the Potomac. His resignation was accepted, and Hooker, whose name led the list of dismissals, was put in his stead; but as he was junior in rank of Franklin, the latter was as a matter of course relieved from his command.

The day after the Mud Campaign ended, General Franklin and his close friend, and one of his corps commanders, General W. F. Smith ("Baldy"), addressed a most interesting letter to the President, pointing out in the clearest manner the great difficulties of the plan of advance on the Fredericksburg line, the great length of the route, the great numbers of troops required for its protection, its vulnerability at every point, the scattering of forces for guarding the enormous trains should the line be abandoned as the army advanced, carrying all its supplies with it; then the essentials of a successful advance:

" 1. All the troops available in the east should be massed.

" 2. They should approach as near to Richmond as possible without engagement.

" 3. The line of communication should be absolutely free from danger of interruption.

" A campaign on the James River enables us to fulfill all these conditions more absolutely than any other, for:

" 1. On the James River our troops from both north



and south can be concentrated more rapidly than they can be at any other point.

"2. They can be brought to points within twenty miles of Richmond without risk of an engagement.

"3. The communication by the James River can be kept up by the assistance of the navy without the slightest danger of interruption."

Then follows the outline scheme of details, all with an equal clearness, comprehensiveness, and simplicity.

It is refreshing to find amid all the confusion of mind and method of those days a piece of work so thorough, so sound, so completely thought out. It is a study by a master not only of theory but of practice.

And now befell General Franklin one of those cruelties born of many motives, weaknesses, afterthoughts, prejudices, partialities, personal and political, from which such times are never free.

The congressional committee on the conduct of the war appeared to investigate the causes of the defeat at Fredericksburg, summoning before them General Burnside and many of his officers.

Six days after the battle Burnside had written Halleck a description of his plan of the action as it was fought: "I discovered that he (the enemy) did not anticipate the crossing of our whole force at Fredericksburg, and I hoped, by rapidly throwing the whole command over at that place to separate, by a vigorous attack, the forces of the enemy on the river below from the forces behind and on the crest in the rear of the town, in which case we could fight him with great advantage in our favor. For this we had to gain a height on the extreme right of the crest which commanded a new road

lately made by the enemy." This "height on the extreme right of the crest" was Marye's heights, which were exceedingly difficult of approach and had been made impregnable. They were separated from the line of heights below the town by Hazel Run; these latter heights were occupied by Longstreet's men as far as Deep Run, below which and down to the Massaponax Jackson's divisions were massed, with Stuart formed across the left of Franklin's line of battle. The plan given General Halleck by Burnside is the plan on which the battle was fought, and it accounts for his order of 7.30 A. M. to Franklin as a subordinate feature of the plan. In order to divide the enemy's troops on the crest in rear of the town from those on the hills below, he delivers a tremendous assault on Marye's heights, and orders Franklin to send one division to seize Hamilton's heights at the extreme left of these heights, in the hope that the seizure of these two points would "compel the enemy to evacuate the whole ridge between these two points." It was in view of this hoped for contingency doubtless that he ordered Franklin to keep his entire command in readiness for a rapid movement down the old Richmond road, which would have brought him on the rear of the dislodged enemy. The two series of heavy assaults on Marye's heights failed disastrously. The division sent to seize Hamilton's heights was met with overwhelming force, while the rest of Franklin's divisions were held in place alike by the constant pressure of the enemy and by his orders to have all in readiness for a rapid movement down the road.

But to the Committee on the Conduct of the War General Burnside said: "The enemy had cut a road

along in the rear of the line of heights where we made our attack, by means of which they connected the two wings of their army and avoided a long detour around through a bad country. . . . I wanted to obtain possession of that new road, and that was my reason for making an attack on the extreme left. I did not intend to make the attack on the right until that position had been taken, which I supposed would stagger the enemy, cutting their line in two; and then I proposed to make a direct attack on their front and drive them out of their works." General Palfrey well says of this statement: "It cannot be true."

From 7.30 in the morning until night fell, General Burnside knew constantly from his own staff officer, who carried the order to and remained all day with Franklin, observing and reporting every act done by him, everything going on in that part of the field. If he did not mean to attack on the right until Hamilton's heights were carried, why did he attack? If he meant to cut the enemy's line in two and stagger him before trying Marye's heights, why did he not allow Franklin to do precisely that thing which he had begged to be allowed to do: mass his own men for the assault, supported by Stoneman's divisions and Hancock, and deliver the blow which Meade's attack showed would have gone through so delivered?

But the letter to General Halleck was not shown to the committee, nor known to them until long after.

When Franklin was summoned before them he asked Burnside if they were aware of his order of 7.30 A. M. of the 13th, or if he should give them a copy. Burnside replied that he had already given them a copy of that

order and it was then in their hands. Franklin relied, as he had a right, on the word of his commander and of the man who had assured him that he was only one of all his generals who had held up his hands; and he was betrayed. The committee never heard of the order until months afterward. Between the new plan of the battle, which none but the committee had ever heard of and the success of which was made to hinge on Franklin's attack, and the suppression of the orders under which he acted, he was in an utterly false light and false position before the committee, and he was in complete ignorance of the mischief and how it had been wrought. He became conscious of a great prejudice, but was unable to fathom it or its cause. The committee refused to hear some of his witnesses, General Hardie among them. He was not confronted with Burnside's statements. But the committee published to the world their verdict that Franklin was responsible for the loss of the battle through disobedience of orders.

This most undeserved blow could have fallen on no man more sensitive to its fullest import. To use his own words: "If this be true, I have been guilty of the highest crime known to military law, for the commission of which my life is forfeit and my name consigned to infamy."

And so, without a trial, without that responsible judgment of his companions in arms and his peers to which every man charged with military default is entitled, this man of oft tried ability and proven strength, to whom honor and loyalty were the breath of his life, and upon whom every superior had relied as on a rock, stood charged by an irresponsible, Star-Chamber Committee.

"of the highest crime known to military law." No court-martial was ever even suggested. To all men who knew men and facts the charge was preposterous.

Franklin at once published a reply to the Committee's Report, which was a complete refutation, and by which they were first made aware both of the real plan on which the battle was fought and which Burnside had already given in his letter to Halleck, and also of the order under which Franklin acted during the day. Not until the committee had received his reply quoting that order was Franklin aware that they had never before seen it. Not until a second edition of the reply was published with additional notes and correspondence was the full iniquity of the matter made clear.

His reply and the correspondence which followed fully cleared his record with the War Department and left the responsibility where it belonged. But the poison of the committee's charge, caught up and exploited by the press with a public eager to fix final blame somewhere, wrought him great prejudice, and Hay, in his life of Lincoln, says: "Franklin's undoubted talents never again had an opportunity for exercise in a field worthy of them." His great talents, his professional skill, his judgment, his courage, his methods, his services, and his rank pointed to him as the proper commander of the Army of the Potomac. But the cloud overshadowed him. Smarting under the great wrong and "in perfect darkness of soul," Franklin asked for any assignment whereby he might in some way serve his country. And in July he was sent to New Orleans to take command of the Nineteenth Corps, which had formed a part of Banks' command at Port Hudson.

After Grant captured Vicksburg he purposed to use his entire army at once for the capture of Mobile, using that point as a base for new operations on the heart of the enemy's country, and began his arrangements accordingly, a part of which was the concentration of an army at New Orleans. But Halleck, who was still general-in-chief, sent away a strong force under Steele to Little Rock, and set a new task for the New Orleans contingent. Maximilian, supported by a French army, was emperor of Mexico, and it was deemed necessary to cut off Confederate traffic in supplies across the border and keep watch over the newcomers. These operations were in charge of General Banks, who decided on Sabine Pass as his advanced base. This point was occupied and fortified by the Confederates. Franklin was ordered to proceed thither with 5,000 men on transports, escorted by four gunboats, which were to reduce the batteries and prepare the landing. The outfit of the expedition was miserably unfit and inadequate, but no time was allowed to remedy deficiencies to provide necessities. The transports carrying the troops arrived outside the bar, the gunboats entered the channel and engaged the batteries with disastrous results. Two of the vessels were immediately disabled and surrendered, the third ran aground, and the fourth and last put to sea, returning, however, to convey the transports back to New Orleans, where they arrived September 11th.

The next day Franklin, with the Nineteenth and two divisions of the Thirteenth Corps, took up his march to ascertain if it was practicable to reach the Sabine River

on a line parallel to the coast. He skirmished his way to Vermillionville when Banks abandoned further attempt on that line. Here he made demonstrations in aid of the naval expedition sent by Banks to the western coast, and, on the success of the latter, moved to New Iberia. Several engagements took place, but the enemy avoided serious conclusions. And now came the Red River expedition.

Kirby Smith, with the troops of Price and Taylor, occupied the Red River valley, with headquarters near Shreveport. Halleck was determined to rout him out of the valley and take possession. To which end he designed to send Banks against him on the south while Steele supported him from the valley of the Arkansas on the north. But it took at least two weeks for these widely separated commanders to communicate. At this juncture, the winter weather having put a stop to Grant's operations, Sherman lent Banks 10,000 men under A. J. Smith for a month, escorted by the best part of Porter's fleet and Ellet's Marine Brigade, to report to Alexandria, which was the rendezvous, March 16th. Franklin was in command of the troops of Banks' army proper, and Banks commanded the joint forces. Steele was expected to proceed down the Washita until within communicating distance. The troops of Franklin and Smith were to proceed on roads parallel with and near the river, accompanied by the fleet. On the 27th of March they set forth with Franklin in the advance. On the 31st of March his cavalry occupied Natchitoches, the enemy retiring, and two days later his infantry arrived. Here, in order to give his columns better roads, Banks diverged so far from the river as to be entirely out of touch with



the fleet and without its invaluable support. In place of supplies from the transports, he had to organize a large wagon train, and to weaken his forces by detaching a division to guard the fleet, whose progress up the narrow and shoaling river was becoming more difficult. The route chosen led through Pleasant Hill, a strong position with good water, where the enemy was in some force, to Sabine Cross Roads and Mansfield, a point commanding several important routes and where Taylor was concentrating. While awaiting the supply trains, Franklin's cavalry reconnoitered the roads and by several spirited skirmishes located the enemy. On the 6th of April Franklin resumed his march to Pleasant Hill, where his cavalry had taken position. On the 7th his cavalry under Lee advanced, fighting steadily and pressing back a brigade of Taylor's cavalry, until at a branch of the Bayou St. Patrice he was brought to a stand by the entire cavalry force of the enemy under Green. The same day Franklin reached Pleasant Hill and made his dispositions for an advance with a brigade of cavalry in front to clear the way until the main body of the enemy was reached. Banks joined him during the day and overruled his dispositions, and ordered a combination advance guard of cavalry, infantry, and artillery, which, with their large trains, made, as events proved, an awkward force to handle.

#### SABINE CROSS ROADS.

Taylor decided to make the fight at Sabine Cross Roads, three miles from Mansfield, and made his dispositions. On the morning of the 8th the advance guard



moved slowly forward. Franklin followed with his advance division to the Bayou St. Patrice and halted to allow his columns to close up and concentrate. Banks joined the advance guard, and soon sent back for another brigade of infantry. Franklin sent the division commander, Ransom, with it, with orders not to allow both brigades to become engaged; his purpose being to keep in touch only with the enemy until Emory's division could close up and A. J. Smith's ten thousand should have come in supporting distance, a matter of some time with so large a body in column on a single road. But Banks was at the front and assumed the command, and, forgetful of the conditions in rear, determined to push ahead. Lee's first attempt to advance on Taylor's position was met in such fashion that he at once realized the situation and urged Banks to wait until proper concentration could be had. But Banks sent orders to Franklin to push forward his Thirteenth Corps, and ordered Lee to maintain his position until it arrived. When Ransom's second brigade arrived, he put the two in line, and hearing that Franklin was coming in person with the advance division (Cameron's) of the Thirteenth Corps, he decided to attack at once in spite of Lee's endeavor to dissuade him. But Taylor, having made thoroughly ready, now did the attacking himself in such force at all points and with such vigor that he swept Banks back with heavy loss and without check until he reached the woods, where Franklin met him at the head of Cameron's division, which had double-quickenened nearly the entire distance from Bayou St. Patrice. There were but fifteen hundred with him, and these he put in at once, but they were powerless to check the attack. Lee's batteries, unable to fire or ma-

neuver in the woods, were abandoned by their drivers, who took to the trains which vainly endeavored to flee. The Confederates reached the rear of Banks' right, and the retreat was general. Franklin and Ransom were both badly wounded while trying to rally the troops, but the retreat was not stayed until it reached Emory's division.

When Franklin started with Cameron's division for Sabine Cross Roads he sent back an order to Emory to come forward in all haste. As soon as he discovered that Banks had gotten the advance guard into an unsupported fight with Taylor's army, he sent an order back to Emory to halt immediately as soon as he could find a good defensive position and establish himself. Emory reached a stream just in time to form while the retreat went by, and here he received the assault so firmly and with such a heavy fire that it was repulsed, and could not be renewed until the lines were reformed, and it was now night. The defeated troops halted in Emory's rear; but the position was too precarious for an offensive movement, and during the night the whole force fell back to Pleasant Hill, where it joined A. J. Smith's ten thousand on the morning of the 9th. Careful preparation was at once made on advantageous ground to receive the renewed assault of Taylor's troops, which did not come until four o'clock, and resulted in their complete defeat and their retreat.

Banks no longer felt himself able to pursue his great undertaking, and retreat was decided upon. Franklin, disabled by his wounds, was unable to exercise any further command, though his professional skill and judgment were in frequent requisition, and especially in the extrica-

tion of Porter's fleet from the shallow water of the Red River at Alexandria. But for his advice, Bailey's dam would probably never have been built.

Franklin now returned to Washington. While still weakened and suffering from his wound he was summoned to the City Point to confer with Grant, who proposed to consolidate the four departments of the Susquehanna, Middle, and Western Virginia, and Washington, in which Early was already threatening the Capitol, and put Franklin in command. His strength did not then permit it, and the arrangement was never consummated.

On his return from this visit, landing early in the morning at Baltimore, he found that city in great excitement in the momentary expectation of an attack by Early's troops. It was thought that an early train to Philadelphia would have time to pass the danger point undisturbed, and General Franklin boarded the train. Not far out, however, the train was stopped by a cavalry force under the famous Harry Gilmore, and Franklin was made a prisoner. That night he managed a shrewd escape, and hid himself for two days and nights in woods and cornfields, so near the parties searching for him as often to overhear their conversation, but unable to move any distance because of his wound. Toward the last, from pain and weakness and from want of food he became delirious. He found his cornfield filled with warriors clad in armor and carrying ancient weapons. Although fully realizing that he was the victim of illusions, he could not dispel his feverish fancies until he grasped their pikes and found them cornstalks. He finally reached the house of a Union man, who hid and fed him until he could send word to General Lew Wallace, then in command at Balti-

more, who sent out a squadron of cavalry and two regiments of infantry to escort him to the city.

#### LIFE IN HARTFORD.

In the following autumn General Franklin was assigned to duty as President of the Retiring Board, in which capacity he served until he resigned and took up his residence in Hartford.

In 1889 General Franklin was appointed United States Commissioner to the Paris Exposition held that year. He discharged his duties with singular efficiency. The French Government testified its appreciation of his services by making him an officer of the Legion of Honor.

Less conspicuous, perhaps, in the public eye, but of great value to the disabled soldiers and to the country which cares for them, was the service rendered in the management of the National Soldiers' Homes throughout the country as president of the board since 1880 until his resignation in January, 1900, and for many years its treasurer as well; a work for which he was especially fitted by his wise sympathy for the men and his prudence, sound judgment, careful economy, and strict and thoroughly intelligent attention to the multitude of details, involving the expenditure of many millions.

The State of Connecticut profited very largely by his professional knowledge and skill and his fearless integrity in the construction of its present capitol.

#### ESTIMATE OF HIS CHARACTER.


There are men whose influence upon their times and whose impress on men's memories come from the un-

usual development and activity of certain specific but limited abilities, or from special traits of character. An unusually energetic exhibition of even a moderate amount of these may make their possessor strikingly prominent under favorable circumstances, the more so perhaps for their onesidedness. There are those, again, whose mark is made, not by a few strong points of either mind or character standing out from the background of an otherwise commonplace personality, but by mental powers of unusual breadth and force and traits of character of unusual value, and yet all so full rounded and balanced, so harmonious in blending and in exercise, so free from defect in structure and from noise in action, that not until by long opportunity men have measured them and their work with other standards of being and doing, do their strength and beauty stand revealed in full and impressive majesty.

General Franklin was distinctly of this type. Physically, intellectually, and spiritually, he was built upon a magnificent model. As a scholar of the first order in his chosen lines of study, and sympathetic with all intellectual life and effort, as a man of action, clear in insight and in thought, broad and strong in his grasp, certain in judgment, definite, direct, prompt and vigorous in action, peculiarly diligent in attention to duties of whatever magnitude, pure and highminded, with an integrity that never left his vision at fault and a courage that never hesitated, wise, prudent and strong, simple, kindly, of perfect but unconscious dignity, he presented a rare balance of great gifts. He graduated from West Point at the head of a class remarkable for its membership of men who made themselves famous later on. Among those

intimate with his professional capacity and attainments there was never a question that these were of the highest grade. He was one of the few men deemed entirely competent to the highest military command, while his character as a man rendered complete the trust reposed in him. All his qualities marked him for a great commander. Added to those already mentioned he had — what so few possess — coupled with a perfect sense of responsibility, that confidence which is not born of conceit nor of any undue consciousness of power and often goes with the humblest spirit: the confidence that, having done all possible to prepare for the issue, one can trust his courage and integrity to spend might to the uttermost and life itself, and to face defeat unflinching, in its final hazard: the calm intelligence that knows when the hour of supreme trial has fully come, and the courage that rises to its entire responsibility and to take and, if need be, suffer all consequences. Less happy in his assignments to duty than many lesser men, his was often the hard honor of saving their wreckages instead of leading them to the victories they knew not how to win. Jealousy, intrigue, and complaint were each alike impossible to him. His great soul was patient and steadfast. His patriotism was untouched by any personal considerations. And so he took the duties which the ambitions of others and the diverse influences of the troubled times left for his employment, and went his straightforward way, true man, true knight, and true lover of his nation. Few men of his time could have contributed more from a military point of view to its inner history of influences, measures, and actions. It must be always a matter of profound regret that he has not left such knowledge behind him.

So quietly and unostentatiously was all his work done that only upon a full and detailed survey can the great magnitude of it all, and the great importance of its many parts and the invariable high standard of its excellence, be appreciated. But those who knew the strength and uprightness of his mind and character, the kindliness of his heart, his noble simplicity and personal dignity, his ready devotion to every patriotic interest and duty, the loyalty of his nature and the purity and unaffected piety of his life, know that one of the bravest of gentlemen, one of the purest of patriots, one of the most cherished of friends, and one of the knightliest of men, has answered to his name.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Scott L. Brainerd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

[Editorial from the *Hartford Courant*, March 9, 1903.]

## PATRIOT, SOLDIER, AND CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN.

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Hartford bids good-bye to Major-General Franklin as she bade good-bye to Rear Admiral Bunce — with sorrow, but also with a great pride. The story of his services and battles is told in other columns of *The Courant*. Our simpler but harder task here is to say a few words about the general himself. There have been famous commanders of men who did not look the part. William Buel Franklin filled it superbly, to the eye as well as to the judgment. West Point had splendid material to work with in his case, and turned out a very notable product. The towering old soldier of two wars remained a personage in the after time of peace. His was one of the presences that dignify the streets of the town through which they move, and leave a memory there. That form and face, which all Hartford knew, were the outward and visible signs of the manliness within — the integrity without a stain, the single-hearted, inflexible devotion to duty. His loyalty to his church, to his business associates, and to his friends was off the same piece as his loyalty to his country.

He was one of the group of trained soldiers — West Pointers — in the war of 1861-65, who fell for a time



under suspicion, on the part of some vehement editors, of being callous to the woes of the slave and skeptical as to the military genius of this or the other popular favorite of the hour. Some sprinkles of the aspersion that embittered Fitz John Porter's life for years fell in General Franklin's direction, but they did him no permanent harm. His soldierly record was as clear as his soldierly conscience. There will be nothing but laurel, as profusely heaped as nobly earned, for the grave of as true a patriot and gentleman as ever breathed American air.

The following minute was adopted at a meeting of the Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd, held on Tuesday evening, March 17, 1903:

### WILLIAM BUEL FRANKLIN, 1823 — 1903.

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The Rector, Wardens, and Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd, meeting but a few days after the death of General William Buel Franklin, U. S. A., place on record a tribute of their affection and esteem for one, who, as long as the state of his health allowed, shared the counsels and responsibilities of their body, and during all the years of his residence in Hartford, was a member of the parish. For twenty years, from 1870 to 1890, he was Senior Warden, and at a later date he was made for the rest of his life an honorary vestryman. Others have borne testimony to his faithfulness and bravery as a soldier, his diligence and success as a student of military science, his integrity in business, and his ready and helpful labors for the commonwealth; we gladly testify to the simplicity and truthfulness of his Christian life, the reality and earnestness of his faith, his constant attendance on public worship and the Holy Communion, and the readiness with which he rendered to the Church, and in particular to this parish, every service in his power. We give God thanks for his life among us and for his constantly good example and pray that our lot may be with his among the saints.







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